THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) The Ministry of Finance vide notification No. S.O. 714 (E) dated 7.10.97 has notified a list of industrially backward districts, recently, for purposes of fiscal reliefs to units situated in these districts. In Gujarat these are the districts of the Dangs, Banaskantha and Sabarkantha. Kutch District is not so notified.

(b) and (c) No Sir, under the Growth Centre Scheme, 1988, out of the approved Growth Centres, three growth centres namely Vagra, Gandhidham and Palanpur have been approved for Gujarat State. The growth centre located at Gandhidham is in Kutch district.

Balance of Trade for Current Year

21. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the export target fixed for the financial year 1999-2000 and whether the proportionate targets have been achieved during the first six months;

(b) if so, what are the export earnings and how they compare with anticipated outgo of foreign exchange on our import requirements; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken so that India has favourable balance of trade?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The export target fixed for the financial year 1999-2000 is US $ 37400 million excluding software. As per the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistic provisional data, the value of exports during the first six months i.e. April-September, 1999-2000 is US$ 17461 million, while the value of imports during the period is US $ 22474 million.

(c) A number of steps have been taken to promote exports such as reduction in transaction cost through decentralisation and simplification of procedures and various other measures as enumerated in the Exim Policy. Steps have also been taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions.